



Where does it go?

Teacher preparation

Overarching learning goals: Students are asked to sort a collection of solid waste items, explaining what they think happens to each item. Students are asked to record their thoughts about the waste items on the student worksheet and engage in a class discussion around their answers.

Teacher content information: Prior to activity - Collect a range of clean items of solid household waste (for safety reasons, it's best not to use glass). Suggested items could include a paper envelope, cardboard box, aluminium can, steel can, plastic cream bottle, plastic milk bottle, milk carton, old t-shirt, carrot, broken toy, old shoe, leaves, branch of tree. Make sure that there are no sharp edges on any of the items.



Hot tips: Ensure that the items used in the activity are empty, clean and have no sharp edges.

Student and Classroom organisation:

Step 1: Ask the students to sit in a circle on the floor of the classroom or other large area. This part of the activity can be taken outside.

Step 2: Tip the basket of solid waste items onto the floor in the centre of the circle of students. Explain that you collected all these items from your home, but that you now want to get rid of them. Explain to your students that this is only some of the solid waste from your home (there's a lot more in the cupboard under the sink!). You have some questions about all your rubbish: Where should each item go? Why?

Step 3: Pick one item of rubbish and ask students to tell you where they think it



should go. They may say rubbish bin, recycling bin, compost bin, reuse box, etc. Ask them to explain why they would do this.

Step 4: Repeat this activity for two or three items, inviting different students to volunteer where they think the items should go and why.

Step 5: Ask the students to return to their tables and complete the worksheet for all the items on the floor. Encourage students to share their thoughts about their worksheets with other students at their tables.

Discussion

Step 1. Invite the students to return to the circle to discuss their answers.

Step 2. Ask the students to group or sort the items by where they go (e.g., rubbish bin, recycling bin, compost bin, reuse box).

Step 3. Write these group names on the board. List all the items under the appropriate headings.

Step 4. When this has been completed, discuss the activity to tease out their understandings of what happens next for each grouping:

- Where does rubbish in a rubbish bin go? What happens to it then?
- Where do all the things that are put out for recycling go? What happens to them?
- When things are reused, what does that mean? What happens to them after they have been reused once?
- What happens to things that are put out for composting or worm farms? Where do they go? What happens to them?

At this stage in the unit, the teacher should not try to give answers, but just listen to the students' answers as this will give you insights into their current understandings of the topic.

Assessment/Reflection

Ask the students to participate in a class-wide learning activity. Begin by asking each student to write on sticky notes one thing they have learned from this activity and one question about what they would like to learn about the topic of solid waste. Ask students are to place these sticky notes on a poster with a heading ***Our Questions***



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